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PREFACE

121 This is one of a series of monographs produced under HRAF Subcontracts. This monograph constitutes one portion of a combined effort between Indiana University and Associates for International Research, Inc. for a description of Hungarian society.

The emphasis throughout the present work has been on a description of the Hungarian peasant culture. Other aspects of Hungarian life and are being covered by Associates for International Research, Inc.

This volume has not been edited or evaluated by HRAF. The views and opinions expressed are those of the authors.

It is reproduced as a service to the scholarly community and as a working paper for the Washington branch of HRAF (WAHRAF).

128 This monograph was annotated according to the system of categories in the Outline of Cultural Materials and was printed for simultaneous inclusion in the Area Files.

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INTRODUCTION

114 1. This series of monographs was prepared under contract HRAF-2 Indiana-1 by members of the faculty and staff of Indiana University's Graduate Program in Uralic and Asian Studies, and under the auspices of the Research Center in Anthropology, Folklore, and Linguistics. The undersigned, Chairman of the Program and of the Research Center, served as Principal Investigator. Ruth C. Heffner co-ordinated the project and was its general Editor. Other participants included, on the research staff -- Victor E. Hanzeli, Ken Ishimoto (deceased), Igor Kopytoff (Northwestern University), Nicholas Mihailoff-Shelly, Eeva Kangasmaa Minn, Felix J. Oinas, Alo Raun, Linda Raun, and Joseph Strmecki; and as cartographers -- Joan Harris, Robert Mayfield, and John Ray. The author or authors chiefly responsible for each handbook are indicated on the title of each particular monograph.

128 2. The contract required that a topical format (Annex "A") be followed, wherever applicable. This requirement was, naturally, complied with, even though, from a purely scholarly point of view, a sharply different arrangement of the data, and of their interpretation, would have been more desirable.

3. The staff feel that the severe limitations of time and the inaccessibility of certain important resources resulted in a product which could be considerably bettered, given a more

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128 leisurely approach. The staff, of course, appreciate the circumstances which necessitated rapid completion of their monographs, but urge that these handbooks be revised and expanded at an early opportunity, as well as kept up to date, to insure both comprehensive coverage and the availability of information that is always timely and accurate.

114 4. Because of the pressure of time and the fact that the members of the research team are not native speakers of the English language, some of the manuscripts, despite editing, lack stylistic polish; occasional lapses from the idiomatic will, it is hoped, be eliminated from future versions, In no case do these faults obscure the meaning or distort the substance of the information.

114 5. The scholarly stimulation afforded by the
122 researches undertaken for this project was not materially lessened by the obligation upon the staff to respond to the stringently specific requirements of the contract. While the peoples and languages of the Uralic group have been under continuous investigation at Indiana University for the past twelve years, work by our team on these monographs doubtless tended to enhance further the development of this field at this member institution of the Human Relations Area Files, Inc. whose assistance in providing this splendid opportunity is hereby gratefully acknowledged.

Thomas A. Sebeok
July 1955

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000 Even science has hitherto been unable to give the explanation of many customs. So far in many cases «it is merely a habit — because it is a habit», which Hungarian peasant wisdom thus puts into words: «Death is only a habit, though we do not know who was foolish enough to get accustomed to it !»

121 From the vast complex of Hungarian customs this book publishes merely a few select examples, but perhaps even these will make it evident, how rich, how coloured and to a certain extent how individually Hungarian is the world of our customs.

• 128 In this series of customs we did not think it necessary to arrange the chapters according to the cycles of life, or of farming or of the calendar; we mixed them up, as in life they also follow each other irregularly. Still on the whole we follow the course of the Calendar.

000 Of the material and the explanations of these customs the author attributes very little to himself; he owes all his results to those industrious collectors and learned professors, who through their work were the first to disclose the wonderful riches of the Hungarian world of tradition. They were thorough in their sowing and happy in their reaping.